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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 000452

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/05/28

TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: GAZA BORDER UPDATE: NO CHANGE IN BORDER GUARD
FORCE NUMBERS

REF: A. CAIRO 211 AND PREVIOUS

[1](#)B. CAIRO 420

Classified By: ECPO Minister-Counselor William R. Stewart for
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Military sources told us March 4 that the February 26 media coverage sourced to Israeli officials that Egypt had doubled its Border Guard Force (BGF) numbers along the Egypt-Gaza border is completely innaccurate. The sources told us that the Egyptians have not increased their BGF numbers, and have almost given up trying to persuade Israel to allow them to do so. During the border breach in January, Egypt did deploy additional civilian security forces to Rafah, but they were not military Border Guard Forces. These civilian security forces have been withdrawn to Ismalia (ref B).

[1](#)2. (C) GOE contacts told us March 3 that the Egypt-Gaza border is still secure, and reiterated that they do not expect an imminent breach of the Egyptian border. The Egyptians are continuing to build a wall on the Egyptian side of the international border. Contacts tell us that the GOE is expecting additional clashes between the IDF and Hamas in Gaza, and that IDF Merkava tanks are still in Gaza inside the Kerem Shalom crossing. Our contacts do not assess any direct threat to Egyptian forces, and have reconfirmed that there have been no Egyptian Border Guard Force casualties to date.

[1](#)3. (C) GOE contacts confirmed that on March 2, the GOE opened the Rafah Terminal for 36 wounded Palestinian civilians to travel to Egyptian hospitals; 11 other Palestinian civilians accompanied the 36 wounded. IDF fire in the vicinity of the Palestinian side of the Rafah Terminal reduced the Egyptians' ability to facilitate the transit of additional Palestinian wounded through the terminal.

[1](#)4. (U) On March 3, the leading pro-government daily Al-Ahram and local television news reported that some wounded Palestinians are currently receiving medical care in Cairo hospitals, and that the GOE has made extra amounts of medicines available to treat these Palestinian patients.

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